



*AT THE
WORLD'S HEART*

CALE YOUNG RICE

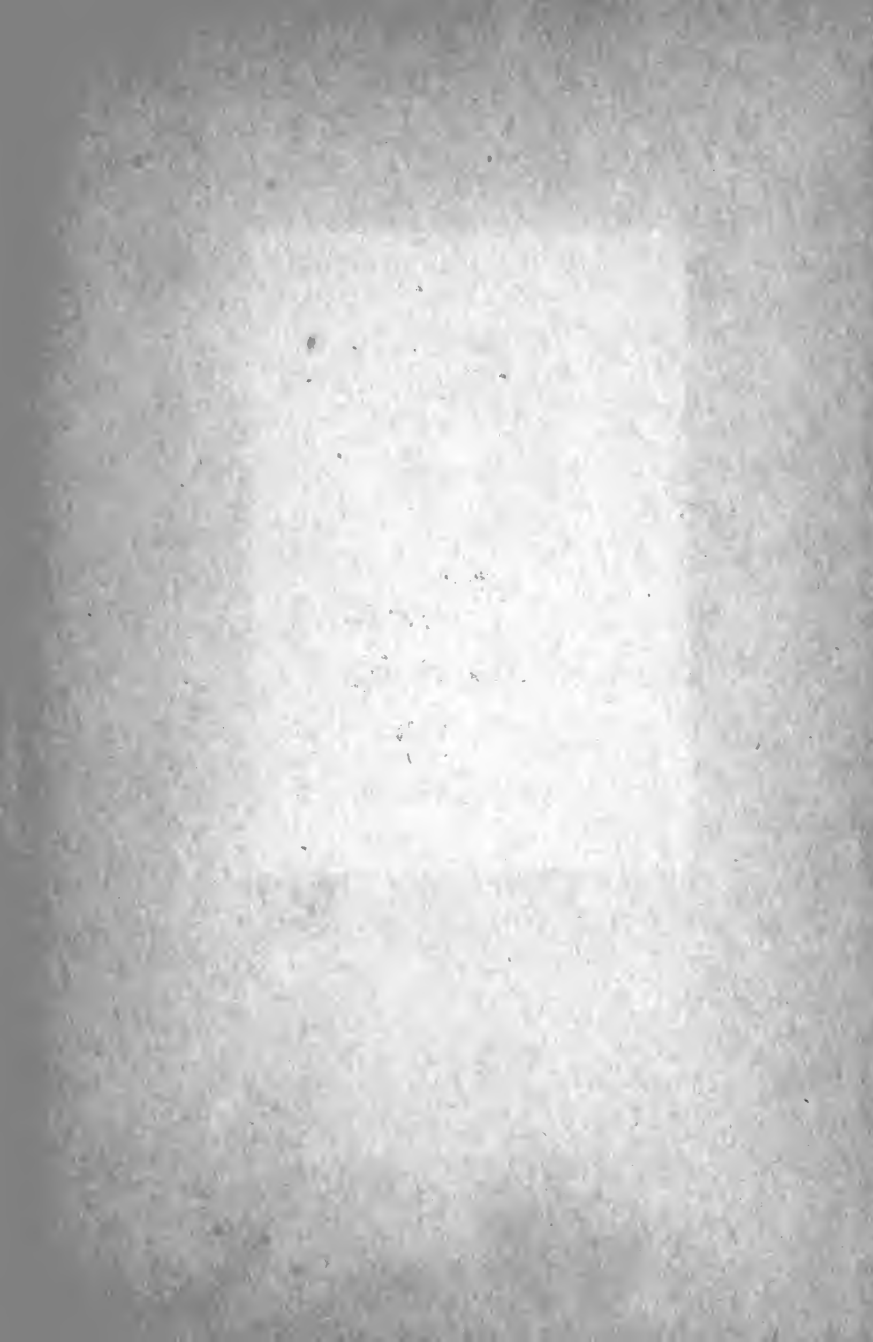


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AT THE WORLD'S HEART

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BY
CALE YOUNG RICE

AUTHOR OF "PORZIA," "FAR QUESTS," "THE IMMORTAL LURE,"
"MANY GODS," "NIRVANA DAYS," "A NIGHT IN
AVIGNON," "YOLANDA OF CYPRUS," ETC.



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TO
A. S. H.

PREFACE

It is with the belief that the poet of the future will come to be more conscious of his planetary, than of his merely national, existence, that I again put forth a volume of poems ranging through both East and West. Awareness of our human unity and identical destiny as earth-dwellers continues to grow upon us; and perhaps no poet can do better than foster this spirit of humanity by a sympathetic interpretation of the life of other lands — as well as of his own.

I add "as well as of his own." For I would not be taken as meaning that the great poetry of the future will necessarily be world-embracing in its vision. "A writer must see immortality from his own windows," it has been said. But owing to the ease and magic of modern communications our windows have come to be world-windows, and in the view from them nothing is any longer considered as alien.

September, 1913.

CALE YOUNG RICE.

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AT THE WORLD'S HEART

AT THE WORLD'S HEART

I

I leant my ear to the world's heart,
(Beat, beat, beat!)
I leant my ear to the world's heart,
Where all its voices meet.
I heard them sound together,
I heard them surge alone,
The far, the near and the nether,
The known — and the unknown.
From desert they rose and mountain,
From city and sea and plain,
And the voices, all, to one voice
Blent, in the bitter pain:

*We are the people of Sorrow,
Haled from the silent earth,*

AT THE WORLD'S HEART

*Happy is it,
Happy is love —
Happier should be birth!
We come to the land of the living,
We go to the realm of death,
We bide for a day
And then . . . away!
O why are we given breath!*

II

I leant my ear to the world's heart,
(Leant, more nigh!)
A saddened ear to the world's heart,
Fain for a sweeter cry.
There came the murmur of nations,
With languor loud, or need,
The sighing of devastations,
Of deed and dark misdeed;
There came the moan of the millions,
Against their tyrant kind,

But in it I heard great Hope's word
Groping, a way to find:

*We are the people begotten
Between Delight and Pain,
Certain is birth,
Certain are They
To breed our like again.
But tho we have filled the valleys
And the sea and the hills with death . . .
It shattered there
Into the prayer,
O why are we given breath!*

III

I leant my ear to the world's heart,
(Long, then, long!)
A closer ear to the world's heart,
And lo — it beat more strong!
And the building of human beauty,
The crushing of human crime,

The music of human duty
Outclarioned fate and time.
Yea over the cry of sorrow
And doubt that is ever brief
There rose the lay of a New Day,
The high voice of Belief:

*We are the people of Patience,
Who wait — and look before.
Silent is birth,
Silent the tomb,
But silent Life no more!
Our gods are becoming One God,
And tho there is ever death,
We yet shall learn,
At some day's turn,
Why — why we are given breath!*

SEA RHAPSODY

(Out of Hongkong)

Never again, never again

Did I hope to breathe such joy!

The sea is blue and the winds halloo

Up to the sun "Ahoy!"

"Ahoy!" they shout and the mists they rout

From the mountain-tops go streaming

In happy play where the gulls sway,

And a million waves are gleaming!

And every wave, billowing brave,

Is tipped with a wild delight.

A garden of isles around me smiles,

Bathed in the blue noon light.

The rude brown bunk of the fishing junk
Seems fair as a sea-king's palace:
O wine of the sky the gods have spilt
Out of its crystal chalice!

For wine is the wind, wine is the sea,
Glad wine for the sinking spirit,
To lift it up from the cling of clay
Into high Bliss — or near it!
So let me drink till I cease to think,
And know with a sting of rapture
That joy is yet as wide as the world
For men at last to capture!

“THE MONSOON BREAKS!”

(*India*)

I

Panting, panting, panting,
O the terrible heat!
The fields crack
And the ryot's back
Bursts with the cruel beat.
The wells of the land are empty;
Six hundred feet, in vain,
The oxen lower the buckets o'er
And draw them up again.

Panting, panting, panting:
Parched are the earth and sky.
The elephant in the jungle
Sucks root and river dry.

AT THE WORLD'S HEART

The tiger, in whose throat
The desert seems to burn,
Paces the path,
The pool path —
But only to return.

O the terrible heat!
O the peacock's cry!
The whine of monkeys in the trees,
The children crawling on their knees.
O the terrible heat!
The gods will let us die:
Shiva and Parvati and all
To whom we beat the drum and call,
Vouch to us no reply.

II

Panting, panting, panting:
The plague is drawing near.
Hot is the sun, hot is the night,
And in the heat is fear.

The plague, of famine mate,
Is fumbling at the latch.
Soon his step —
Death-step! —
Listening we shall catch.

O! . . . soon his step!
There's heard the funeral chant;
There's smelt the funeral pyre;
The ghat is red with fire.
O the terrible heat!
The gods are adamant.
Will the monsoon
Let us swoon
Unto the last heart-beat?

III

Panting, panting, panting
Go up toward the sea
And look again, ye holy men,
To learn if clouds may be.

AT THE WORLD'S HEART

Go up into your temples
With sacrifice and song.
Call to the gods,
The cruel gods,
Who beat us down with rays like rods:
Say that we wait too long!

Say that the wells are dry,
Say that our flesh is sand,
Say that the mother's milk is pain,
The child beats at her breast in vain,
Say that we curse the land.
O the terrible heat!
Say that even the moon
In fiery flight
Scorches the night.
O bring us the monsoon!

IV

Panting, panting, panting:
The nautch-girl cannot sing,

But drops her vina in the dust
And sinks, a shrivelled thing.
The fakir has acquired
No merit for six days,
But at the tank,
The shrine's tank,
That never before of vileness stank,
Babbles of water sprays.

V

O the terrible heat!
How long must we endure?
The holy men have come again,
The beating drums are fewer.
A cobra in their path
Licked out an angry tongue
Into the air —
O with despair
Is even the serpent stung!

VI

Panting, panting, panting:
The night again, and day;
And day again, and night again,
Burning their endless way.
The furnace sun goes down,
The branding stars come out
 And sear the eyes
Like fiery flies
Settling upon them — O ye skies,
A drop for us, we pray!

But one — upon the tongue!
To let us know you care.
But one — tho it be wrung
Of breath sent up in prayer.
O the terrible heat!
Again the beating drums.
What do I hear?
A cry? a cheer? . . .

The priests are chanting? nearer, near? . . .
Is it the monsoon comes?

The priests are chanting! . . . O,
What word is on their lips!
"The monsoon breaks! the monsoon breaks!"
A darkness sudden grips
My eyes: is it the shroud
Of blindness, or — a cloud?
The monsoon breaks?
The rain awakes?
Out of the darkened sky it shakes? —
Louder they cry, and loud!

O loud! until at last
The people hear bedazed;
The sick who drank of burning air,
The weak, the well, the crazed!
The temple's sacred cow
Lows gently at the door;
The fakir makes his vow

And chants his Vedic lore;
But all lift up
Their lips' cup
And drink more of it, more!

And singing fills the air! . . .
And soon the Summer's song
Of greenness covers all the earth,
For long the rain is, long!
The rice is flooded far;
While Shiva, Indra, all
The gods, who are the world's laws,
Are lulled to sleep,
In temples deep,
By praises without pause.

IN AN ORIENTAL HARBOUR

All the ships of the world come here,
Rest a little, then set to sea;
Some ride up to the waiting pier,
Some drop anchor beyond the quay.
Some have funnels of blue and black,
(Some come once but come not back!)
Some have funnels of red and yellow,
Some — O war! — have funnels of gray.

All the ships of the world come here,
Ships from every billow's foam;
Fruiter and oiler, collier drear,
Liner and lugger and tramp a-roam.
Some are scented of palm and pine,
(Some are fain for the Pole's far clime).
Some are scented of soy and senna,
Some — ah me! — are scented of home.

All the ships of the world come here,
Day and night there is sound of bells,
Seeking the port they calmly steer,
Clearing the port they ring farewells.
Under the sun or under the stars
(Under the light of swaying spars),
Under the moon or under morning
Murmur they, as the tide swells.

All the ships of the world come here,
Rest a little and then are gone,
Over the crystal planet-sphere
Swept, thro every season, on.
Swept to every cape and isle
(Every coast of cloud or smile),
Swept till over them sweeps the sorrow
Of their last sea-dawn.

THE THRALL OF THE DEAD

(China)

Out of the earth, out of the earth
The innumerable dead
Thrust forth their phantom hands to seize
The living overhead;
Ancestral hands from every field,
By every hut and hill;
Ancestral hands that ever wield
Strong Superstition's will;
Ancestral hands by every grave,
And graves are everywhere,
Tho strong sweet grain might grow instead
To lighten famine's care.

Out of the earth, out of the earth,
North, east and south and west,
The souls of father, brother, son,
Crave worship, without rest;
Claim rites and reverence and fear,
For Ill is in their hands;
Claim progeny, who too must rear
Yet more, for death's demands;
Claim sons — and sons — tho millions stare,
And millions see no shape
But that of Hunger, gaunt and bare,
From which is no escape.

Out of the earth — the haunted earth! —
O is there no surcease?
Will Custom never loose its clutch
Upon this people's peace?
Must life be ever slave to death —
A coolie at the tomb?
Must it forever draw no breath
But where the grave has room?

Must not a fruit or flower spring

But they are corpse-begot?

O shall there be no fair expanse

The buried do not blot?

God of the world, God of the world,

To carven stick or stone

Should all these millions rather pray

Than unto rotted bone.

O rather to the earth, the moon,

To light the warm sun gives,

To Spring, to Summer on the hills —

To anything that lives!

So let the wind of Knowledge sweep

From Thibet to the sea

And save the living from the dead,

Now and eternally.

Yea let the cleansing of it flash,

Until this land again

Shall be no charnel, but the home

Of free and living men.

THE PEASANT OF IRIMACHI

(Japan)

At the time of candle-lighting and rest,
When the shoji-panes are softly aglow,
When the rice within the bowl seems blest
By Buddha — and the mists creep low,
I sit upon the mats, and you,
O-Kuni, from the grave, come back.
I hear at the door
Your geta on the floor
As you slip like a moon thing thro.

You have come across the twilit fields,
For you know that in the shrine I have set
All the offerings the long day yields,
And know that I never can forget!

You know that I am lonely and wait
From temple bell at night to bell at morn.
And so when you glide,
A shadow, to my side,
All the longings in my heart abate.

Yet they say it is not well — the priests,
And they bid me let the love-fires die,
But I go unto their fanes and feasts
And never can they tell me why!
Such love is karma-sent, they say,
And binds me to a thousand births.
But still with the night
I set the candle light
And you come when the mists creep gray.

So I toil: with the yoke upon my brow
Bear the burden of the beasts: so poor
That the lowliest neglect my bow,
And my gifts the very gods scarce endure.

But still I have the thatch and the shrine
And night, O-Kuni, for my peace.
So till I am flung
Under earth, like the dung,
I shall set the shoji-light to shine.

THE BROKEN TRANCE

(Kamakura, Japan)

Blue, blue skies above the Great Buddha bend,
The crêpe-myrtle blooms,
The sêmi sing about,
The dragon-fly gleams against the pine-tree glooms,
The crows upon the hill
In derision shout.

“What,” they caw, to the worshipers that come,
“O what is your god
And Nirvana’s empty sleep!”
The lotos-throng seated on the pale pool nod,
But heed not at all,
And to meditation keep.

Keep; tho sad, over Shaka's silent calm,

A shade creeps strange —

O is it from the pines?

Or is it doubting prescience of the peaceless change

Enveloping his East

That he too divines?

Sees he how, since its wedding with the West,

Desire born anew

And Maya shall increase

Till all the world's soul again is bound, past rue,

Upon the Wheel of Things

With none to release?

Ay, and how sutra years and centuries

Shall fall soon away

From peoples that he found

And taught, all-compassionate, to live their day

In simplest content

Till beyond life's bound?

Blue, blue skies above the Great Buddha bend,
The crêpe-myrtle blooms,
The sêmi sing about,
The dragon-fly gleams against the pine-tree glooms;
But never from His Face
Shall be swept that doubt.

THE PEASANT OF GOTEMBA

(Japan)

The scarecrow in the fields
Is not so poor as I;
Standing amid the rice
He makes the crows fly high;
But if I stood they only
Would pluck me more awry.

But him I envy not,
For he has never heard
Airs in the young bamboo
Breathe low the wind-god's word.
So deaf is he that Summer
Can wake him with no bird.

And blind he is, as well,
Since he has never seen
Wild Fujiyama geese,
Far up above the green,
Flecking the dim white summit
Snow covers, ever clean.

And he has not a thatch
To shelter his torn head,
Nor a son's hand to pay
Shrine-rites when he is dead.
His poor old straw in winter
Will to the ox be fed.

So poverty alone
Is not too dire for those
To whom is given a glimpse
Behind life's fleeting shows
Into the boundless beauty
The blessed Buddha knows.

SUBMARINE MOUNTAINS

Under the sea, which is their sky, they rise
 To watery altitudes as vast as those
 Of far Himàlayan peaks impent in snows
 And veils of cloud and sacred deep repose.
Under the sea, their flowing firmament,
 More dark than any ray of sun can pierce,
 The earthquake thrust them up with mighty tierce
And left them to be seen but by the eyes
Of awed imagination inward bent.

Their vegetation is the viscid ooze,
 Whose mysteries are past belief or thought.
 Creation seems around them devil-wrought,
 Or by some cosmic urgency gone distraught.
Adown their precipices chill and dense

With the dank midnight creep or crawl or climb
Such tentacled and eyeless things of slime,
Such monster shapes as tempt us to accuse
Life of a miscreative impotence.

About their peaks the shark, their eagle, floats,
In the thick azure far beneath the air,
Or downward sweeps upon what prey may dare
Set forth from any silent weedy lair.
But one desire on all their slopes is found,
Desire of food, the awful hunger strife,
Yet here, it may be, was begun our life
Here all the dreams on which our vision dotes
In unevolved obscurity were bound.

Too strange it is, too terrible! And yet
It matters not how we were wrought or whence
Life came to us with all its throb intense
If in it is a Godly Immanence.
It matters not, — if haply we are more

Than creatures half-conceived by a blind force
That sweeps the universe in a chance course:
For only in Unmeaning^a Might is met
The intolerable thought none can ignore.

THE PILGRIM

(As a temple bell sounds)

A temple bell! . . .
And lo, to me,
Who fare far out at sea,
It brings the gloom
Of the temple room —
And the holy image
Of Buddha seated
Upon his lotos!

And so I pray:
“O Calm One! in
The new lives that I win,
Let me as the sound

AT THE WORLD'S HEART

Of a bell be found
To waken worship
In souls that wander
Toward Nirvana!"

PAGEANTS OF THE SEA

What memories have I of it,
The sea, continent-clasping,
The sea whose spirit is a sorcery,
The sea whose magic foaming is immortal!
What memories have I of it thro the years!

What memories of its shores!
Its shadowy headlands doomed to stay the storm;
Its red cliffs clawing ever into the tides;
Its misty moors of royal heather purpling;
Its channeled marshes, village-nesting hills;
Its crags wind-eaten, homes of hungry gulls;
Its bays —
With sailless masts that swing to harbour tides
Until on wings at last they sweep away.

What memories have I too
Of faring out at dawn o'er tameless waters,
Upon the infinite wasted yearning of them,
While winds, the mystic harp-strings of the world,
Were sounding sweet farewells;
While coast and lighthouse tower were fading fast,
And from me all the world slipped like a garment.

What memories of mid-deeps!
Of heaving on thro haunted vasts of foam,
Thro swaying terrors of tormented tides;
While the wind, no more singing, took to raving,
In rhythmic infinite words,
A chantey ancient and immeasurable
Concerning man and God.

What memories of fog-spaces —
Wide leaden deserts of dim wavelessness,
Smooth porpoise-broken glass
As gray as a dream upon despair's horizon;

What sailing soft till lo the shroud was lifted
And suddenly there came, as a great joy,
The blue sublimity of summer skies,
The azure mystery of happy heavens,
The passionate sweet parley of the breeze,
And dancing waves — that lured us on and on
Past islands o'er whose verdant mountain-heads
Enchanted clouds were hanging,
And whence wild spices wandered;
Past iridescent reefs and vessels bound
For ports unknown:
O far, far past, until the sun, in fire,
An impotent and shrunken Orb lay dying,
On heaving twilight purple gathered round.

And then, what nights!
The phantom moon in misty resurrection
Arising from her sepulchre in the East
And sparkling the dark waters —
The unremembering moon!
And covenants of star to faithful star,

Dewy, like tears of God, across the sky;
And under the moon's fair ring Orion running
Forever in great war adown the West.
The nights, the infinite nights!
With cloud-horizons where the lightning slumbered
Or wakened once and again with startled watch,
Again to fall asleep
And leave the moon-path free for all my thoughts
To wander peacefully.
The nights, the opiate nights!
Until the stars sighed out in dawn's great pallor,
Just as the lands of my desire appeared.

What memories have I of it!

THE MALAY TO HIS MASTER

The woman is mine, O chief,
White chief whom the spirits fear;
The woman is mine,
I have bought her with blood,
My mark is upon her brow.
I swept like a shark the sea,
O lord of unbelief,
I swept with a trusty score to her isle
And brought her home in my prau!

She lay in her atap-thatch,
Clad — ah! — in her red sarong.
The cocoanut palms
In the wind she heard,

AT THE WORLD'S HEART

But never my paddles near.
I seized her with mating arms —
O chief, no moon is her match! —
She cried to the hunting-men of her tribe,
But lo, I carried her clear,

And tossed her across the surf!
O chief, she is mine not yours! —
I bore her away
Tho the pearls of her teeth
Bit deep and her rage beat blind.
A hundred of hissing darts,
Each dipt in a venom's scurf,
Slid after us like swift asps of air,
But ever they sank behind.

And so she is mine, twice mine,
For when in the jungle here
I hid her, O lord,
And sang to her heart
And planted the rubber round,

And bought her your rings and silks
And bracelets jewel-fine,
And swept her with kisses like the sea,
At last was her long hate drowned.

And so she is mine, is mine!
White chief, you must give her back.
I bought her with blood,
I will keep her with blood,
So summon your heart from lust,
Or swift, as you say the night
Of Malaya falls, — at a sign,
My people, led by the gods, shall fall
And make of your passion dust.

NIGHTS ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

Nights on the Indian Ocean,
Long nights of moon and foam,
When silvery Venus low in the sky
Follows the sun home.
Long nights when the mild monsoon
Is breaking south-by-west,
And when soft clouds and the singing shrouds
Make all that is seem best.

Nights on the Indian Ocean,
Long nights of space and dream,
When silent Sirius round the Pole
Swings on, with steady gleam;
When oft the pushing prow
Seems pressing where before

No prow has ever pressed — or shall
From hence forevermore.

Nights on the Indian Ocean,
Long nights — with land at last,
Dim land, dissolving the long sea-spell
Into a sudden past —
That seems as far away
As this our life shall seem
When under the shadow of death's shore
We drop its ended dream.

SIGHTING ARABIA

My heart, that is Arabia, O see!
That talismanic sweep of sunset coast,
Which lies like richly wrought enchant-
ment's ghost
Before us, bringing back youth's witchery!

"Arabian Nights!" At last to us one comes,
The crescent moon upon its purple brow.
Will not Haroun and Bagdad rise up now
There on the shore, to beating of his drums?

Is not that gull a roc? That sail Sindbad's?
That rocky pinnacle a minaret?
Does the wind call to prayer from it? O yet
I hear the fancy, fervid as a lad's!

“Allah il Allah,” rings it; O my heart,
 Fall prostrate, for to Mecca we are near,
 That flashing light is but a sign sent clear
From her, your houri, as her curtains part!

Soon she will lean out from her lattice, soon,
 And bid you climb up to your Paradise,
 Which is her panting lips and passion eyes
Under the drunken sweetness of the moon!

O heart, my heart, drink deeply ere they die,
 The sunset dome, the minaret, the dreams
 Flashing afar from youth's returnless streams:
For we, my heart, must grow old, you and I!

MY COUNTRY

My country, O my country, they call you a Market-
place,

Where only the greed of silver and the gloat of gold
are heard,

Where men care but for getting — a getting that
gives no grace,

Where money-right and money-might are the will
of you and the word.

They call you a land of license — *free* but to thug
and thief!

A servile dumping-place for the dirt of the other
lands;

A pest-house for their crime and their poverty and
grief;

A scavenger of nations — diseased in heart and
hands.

They say you have sons no more — sons native-
born and brave;

That the blood of the alien — and the mad — is in
your veins,

And the venom of anarchy, ungovernable and grave,
Is sweeping toward your heart — is gripping about
your reins.

They say the voice of the people is the voice that
sounds your doom —

Democracy but a monster with a million heads that
rave —

Till the wise, the just and the mighty are banished
to make more room

For the briber and demagogue, for the slanderer
and the slave.

So, Prostitute in your passions, they term you, over
the seas,

A Gaud specious and shallow, loose, vulgar, cunning
and loud;

A Lurer away of the soul from its true immensi-
ties

Into the lies of bigness, into the boasts of the crowd.

My country, O my country, these are the things
they cry,

Your sons who are renegade, your troubled friends
and foes,

And this to them do we answer, who for your fame
would die,

Your lovers deplier reading the heart of your weal
and woes, —

This word to them do we answer: That many a god
men serve,

And Money you, for a moment: tho a worse per-
chance is theirs:

But that you have worshipped it with a force, a
faith and a nerve

Betraying the might within you for loftier temple
cares.

That Money has been your god, your wild Romance
of Youth,

All pardonable to a land with a virgin hope for the
world,

But that you have kept o'er all in the pantheon
of Truth,

One image of endless faith — in a starry flag en-
furled;

Yea, that, if you worshipped Mammon, 'twas ever
because its face

Seemed but as the face of Freedom, your starry-
clad and strong,

And *was*, to many a million of many a martyred
race,

Who hungered — or to your shelter fled tyranny
and wrong.

Wherefore, for the bread you gave them, we say,
they shall pay you strength,

For the great and glad asylum, a harvest of hope
and song.

And out of their shackles broken shall mould for
you, at length,

Perchance a mightier nation — a manhood yet
more strong.

For ever the crime they bring you, as wildly they
escape,

Is but the crime of the ages, that flames in them
at last,

And kindles you unto pity — and progress from the
ape,

Who knows not brotherhood — nor the future from
the past.

So when their cry to the clamour of the Monster
million-voiced

Is joined, and the vaster chorus ascends toward
the Light,

We know, with pride, you will listen — nor fear,
but be rejoiced,
And hear, down under the tumult, still hear, deep-
hid, the Right.

And yet — reproach is a warning of a peril that
may be.

We would not have you niggard of your breasts to
human need,

But now the withholding season has come — until
you see

How truly the milk of freedom makes brothers
every breed.

THE SNAIL AND I

The snail and I cling to the rock,
We two alone by the glassy sea
That under the sun draws silently
Its breath, then breaks with spumy shock;
We two; for even the briny pool
Has not one shambling crab that moves;
But in its granite glossy grooves
The pent tide-water warms its face
And still weeds hang their idle lace
On looms of mosses green and cool.

The snail and I cling to the rock,
The tide is slipping inward slow.
Here to our cleft it soon will flow,
At his shell-house alone to knock.

The tide that daily comes with food
For his dumb small unconscious need
That grows no greater: while I bleed
With wants no feeding brings content —
For dual dreaming man seems meant
On what the world has not to brood.

The snail and I cling to the rock,
Strange comrades whom the sea has cast
Together till such hours have passed
As at my sadness came to knock.
But wherefore did the long day give
Me unto him? lest some gray gull
Should on him gorge a fain crop full?
Infinity alone knows why:
For he was born to live and die,
As I perchance to die and live.

SONGS TO A. H. R.

I

MINGLINGS

It is the old old vision,
The moonlit sea — and you.
I cannot make disseverance
Between the two.
For all the world's wide beauty
To me you seem,
All that I love in shadow
Or glow or gleam.

It is the old old murmur,
The sea's sound and your voice.

God in his Bliss between them
 Could make no choice.
For all the world's deep music
 In you I hear:
Nor shall I ask death, ever,
 For aught more dear.

II

FIDES PERENNIS AMORIS

Tho God should send me,
 When I die,
To the last star
 Across His sky,
And bid all space between us be
Oblivion — one traverseless sea:

Tho He should give me,
 There, a task,
Sweeter than any
 I could ask,

AT THE WORLD'S HEART

And, with the task, achievement, too,
Greater than all I here shall do:

Yea, tho He purposed
Thus to let
Me, severed from you,
All forget;
Remembrance like a magnet still
Would draw my heart to you and will.

So I should wander
On the marge
Of that new world
With strangeness large,
Leaving my task to turn a face
Somehow toward your dwelling-place.

And I should listen
Thro the stars
To silent hintings
Of lost bars

Of music that was once your voice:
In no dream should I more rejoice.

Or I should tremble
 When the breeze
 Brought to my cheek
 Infinities
Of dim forgotten touches love
Once swept me with, like a wing'd dove.

Nor could the presence
 Of His throng
Of noblest spirits
 Hush, for long,
In me the unremembered bliss —
The vanished spell of days like this.

For in the trysting
 Of true souls
There is no distance
 That controls:

Not space nor God can keep them twain —
Only annihilation's reign.

III

HOW MANY WAYS

How many ways the Infinite has

To-night, in earth and sky:

A falling star, a rustling leaf,

The night-wind ebbing by.

How many ways the Infinite has:

A fire-fly over the lea,

A whippoorwill on the wooded hill,

And your dear love to me.

How many ways the Infinite has:

The moon out of the East;

A cloud that waits her shepherding,

To wander silver-fleeced.

How many ways the Infinite has:
A home-light in the West,
And joy deep-glowing in your eyes.
Wherein is all my rest.

IV

LOVE AND INFINITY

Across the kindling twilight moon
A late gull wings to rest.
The sea is murmuring underneath
Its vast eternal quest.
The coast-light flashes o'er the tide
A red and warning eye,
And oh the world is very wide,
But you are nigh!

The stars come out from zone to zone,
The wind knows every one
And blows their message to my heart,
As it has ever done.

“They are all God’s,” it tells me, “all,
However huge or high.”

But ah I could not trust its call —
Were you not by!

V

STAR-WANDERINGS

A down the paths between the stars
Last night we went a-wandering,
The sod of space beneath our feet
Was soft as violet dreams.
Close, close to many a moon that shone
We wandered, hand in hand, alone,
And everything to us was known —
And everything was sweet —
For all the world was as it seems
When love is made complete.

We wandered past Aldebaran
And Vega jewelling the Lyre,

We lost ourselves in nebulas
Of vast Orion's sword.
We called to Sirius, the red,
And O to many a star that's dead,
While echoes back to us were shed
Of life that glorious was,
And while love thro us silent poured
Its peace, without a pause.

We wandered, wandered, on and on,
Thro dwindling shining ways, till space
In all its primal pureness lay,
A starless reach beyond.
And into it we passed to see
If God in such a void could be —
And still the soul of it was He,
As of the starry way.
Then, ah, time touched us with his wand
And all was yesterday.

VI

IN THE NIGHT

When I lie unsleeping,
When the darkness seems
Like a lonely sepulchre
Where I'm shut in dreams,
I have but to touch you,
Reaching thro the night,
Then does all the vast tomb change
Into living light.

Then does space unbounded
Fill once more with stars,
While my worn and haunted heart
Ceases from old wars.
Then does rest come to me,
And, it may be, sleep:
Such infinitude has love —
Such watch can it keep.

VII

MONITIONS

Sad as an inland gull, far from the salt wave winging,
Lost or lured from the sea — from all its heart
 has known,
Am I, when I think that death, somewhere, may
 now be bringing
The hour, my love, to sever us, and send each
 wandering lone!

VIII

TRANSFUSION

A shoal-light flashes East,
 And livid lightning West,
The silvery dark night-sea between,
 On which we ride at rest,
And gaze far, far away
 Into the fretless skies,

AT THE WORLD'S HEART

World-sadness in our thought — but ah,
Content within our eyes.

The ship's bell strikes — the sound
Floats shrouded to our ears,
Then suddenly, as at a touch,
The universe appears
A Presence Infinite
That penetrates our love
And makes us one with night and sea
And all the stars above.

BEAUTY AND STILLNESS

(In the ruined Greek Theatre, Taormina, Sicily)

How still it is! Between me and the sea,
Between me and far Etna's snowy slope,
The midges in the sunlight idly move,
As if they had of life but drowsy hope.
No cock crows, not a bird or wind is singing
About this eaglet town whose eyrie hangs
Upon a high cliff; not a bell is ringing
From church or convent tower
The sleepy hour;
And not a voice of afternoon comes bringing
Amid these ruins joy, or griefs that lower.

Thro the rent walls and arches where I lie
 With silent broken columns basking round,
Is framed as radiant a scene as eye
 May hope to dwell on; yet my heart unbound
Is not enthralled — but to the voiceless vision
 Of villa, castle, sky and sea is cold.
And tho their beauties blend, with calm Elysian,
 Since the bright sunlight's fall
 Is over all,
My thoughts blend not, but brood with indecision,
 That seems all aspiration to appall.

And what is it that so can trouble us
 Mid scenes so fair and peaceful? Is it, here,
Times's still destruction striking to the soul
 The certainty that death is ever near?
Once there were plaudits where this silence passes,
 Once there was glory where these ruins reign,
Once Greece and Rome sat thrall'd where now
 the grasses

Alone are audience
Of the intense
Lone tragedy that year on year amasses:
O is fate's power upon us so immense?

Or is it that too-beautiful sometimes
Will make us sad as too-imperfect can?
That the Ideal in full bodiment
But leaves more bleak the wonted life of man?
To Etna, poet of the azure heaven,
King of myth-makers, does this scene belong;
But unto us of lowly mortal leaven,
To us who scarce can hope
For greater scope
On earth than is comprised in seven times seven,
Must not a grandeur less immortal ope?

Ay, and more intimately kin to us!
So from snow-summit and the sapphire sea,
From plain and promontory do I turn,
And distances that dream majestically,

To yon bare ledge of rock, where cactus-pendants
 In homely and grotesque confusion cling,
As to our niches we, who know transcendence
 Of this our little life
 With want so rife,
But makes us, oft, dissatisfied attendants
 Upon dull Toil that soon becomes loathed Strife.

THE CONTESSA TO HER JUDGES

(Palermo)

Do not suppose that I confess
I sinned — I who have killed him!
For did he not go nightly there
To her balcony and sing —
Until she bade him up to her
And in her arms stilled him,
Then sent him back with lies of love
To me — a shameless thing?

Do not suppose that I confess:
Not unto God, the Father,
Sitting, with mercy in His eyes,
And ready to shrive all,

AT THE WORLD'S HEART

And shrinking not away from me,
But listening to me rather,
Would I say, "I am on sin's flood,
Save me, or I am drowned!"

Ah no . . . For had he that I loved
But said, "I love *her* better;
You are my wife — but Beauty reigns
As mistress of men's soul!"
I would have scorned to spill her cup
Of joy — but would have let her
Clasp it to her and drink of it
Whatever he should dole.

Yes, had he only dealt me fair,
But once, and not pretended,
While I with ready doting still
Gave all of soul or flesh —
To a belief I blush for now,
We might at last have ended

Merely as many have before,
Not in this bloody mesh!

For love has too its Holy Ghost
To sin against, past pardon;
Love too, and I in killing him
Have done no more a wrong
Than Christ will, when He comes again
From Paradise, to harden
His heart against all blasphemy
That surges from Hell's throng.

ON THE UPWARD ROAD

Within a city I paused, in pity
Of human sorrow and human wrong;
Of bitter toiling, of sad assoiling,
Of fatal foiling to weak and strong.

I paused where centred on sin throngs entered
A door of evil and lust and greed.
I saw dark faces whereon disgraces
Had writ their traces for all to read.

I said: *It is human, nor man nor woman
Is worse or better than men before.
Since time's beginning there has been sinning,
While time is spinning there shall be more.*

*For, spite of sages that search the ages
Back to the mammoth and saurian;
That find a growing, an upward flowing
Of Good all-knowing, man is but man.*

*In spite of heavens, in spite of leavens,
Of yeasty yearnings to run and climb,
He is no surer that life is purer,
Or that a Juror sits over time.*

*He takes the seasons, each with its treasons
Of heat or tempest, of sun or snow,
Half doubtful whether a better weather
Would work together with one so low.*

*His gods are many, or one, or any:
He must have worship to hush his fear.
So all the spaces thro which thought races
He fills with Faces that hide — yet hear.*

*Or when death sickens his heart it quickens
His need, so lonely for love's applause,
That of his dreamings — the merest seemings
Of deathless gleamings, he makes him Laws.*

*And with repentance will serve their sentence —
In hopes of gaining again one breast.
The universes that doom disperses
His faith immerses in Life all-blest.*

*He is so little that his acquittal,
Of all great Nature impels him to,
He cries for bravely: yet ever gravely,
Or sad, or suavely, the Skies will woo.*

*But doubts while wooing, so keeps pursuing
Two roads — one starry and one of earth.
Nor ever clearer seems one, or nearer
His goal — or dearer in weal or worth.*

Thus, in a city, impelled by pity
More than despair I paused and cried.
But in my being a deeper seeing,
A truer pleading to me replied: —

*You speak in passion — in the dark fashion
Of those who suffer because they grope;
To whom despairing seems the true daring
When doubt long-faring no door can ope.*

*For 'tis not certain that sin's dark curtain
Of imperfection hangs 'still so black;
That man has lifted no edge, or rifted
No fold, or sifted light thro no crack.*

*He stumbles ever, in his endeavour,
And seems no better than he has been.
But life is vaster and he more master
Now, if no faster he sinks in sin.*

*And, too, his duty is not mere beauty
Of moral being, he is a Child
Of higher station, of all creation —
Whose aspiration runs thro him wild.*

*A thousand courses on him life forces,
A thousand visions that bring a need
To search abysses for all he misses:
From all he wisses to frame his creed.*

*So all the wages that thro the ages
He, Nature's vassal, with toil has won,
All secrets looted, all lies refuted
Must be computed as good well done.*

*Praise then be to him that strongly thro him
There flows the effort to find his goal,
That faith defeated — by false gods cheated,
And oft unseated, still rules his soul.*

CHARTINGS

There is no moon, only the sea and stars;
There is no land, only the vessel's bow
On which I stand alone and wonder how
Men ever dream of ports beyond the bars
Of Finitude that fix the Here and Now.
A meteor falls, and foam beneath me breaks;
The phosphor fires within it faintly die.
So soft the sea is that it seems a sky
On which eternity to life awakes.

The universe is spread before my face,
Worlds where perchance a million seas like this
Are flowing and where tides of pain and bliss
Find, as on earth, so prevalent a place
That nothing of their wont we there should miss.

The Universe, that man has dared to say
Is but one Being — ah, courageous thought!
Which is so vast that hope itself is fraught
With shame, while saying it, and shrinks away.

Shrinks, even as now! For clouds sweep up the skies
And darken the wide waters circling round,
From out whose deep arises the old sound
Of Terror unto which no tongue replies
But Faith — that nothing ever shall confound.
Not only pagan Perseus but the Cross
Is shrouded — with wild wind and wilder rain,
That on me beat until my soul again
Sings unsundering to fears of Loss.

For this I know, — yea, tho all else lie hid
Uncharted on the waters of our fate,
All lands of Whence or Whither, whose estate
In vain imagination seeks to thrid,
Yet cannot, for the fog within Death's gate —

This thing I know, that life, whate'er its Source
Or Destiny, comes with an upward urge,
And that we cannot thwart its mighty surge,
But with a joy in strife must keep the course.

THE FOUR ENCHANTMENTS

(Of Japan)

There is a land I know, where four enchantments
ever

Enfold the heart with beauty — and strangeness
from afar,

And fashion all its hours of unhappiest endeavour
Into forgotten failure; and these four enchant-
ments are: —

Ever the sound of water, of rain or rushing river;
Ever the wraith of mist, walking the mountain side;
And the pines it passes, black; and the temple bells
that shiver

The deep grey solemn silence in whose soul the gods
abide.

THE GOD OF EASE

(As a prodigal sees him)

A temple, now, I know in Yokohama,
With carven dragons climbing to the eaves,
The god of it the heathen call Gautama,
He's fat and calm, and large of feet and sleeves.
The faithful come and clang a gong before him,
And clap and fling a copper on the floor,
And paper lantern shadows swinging o'er him
Lull lazy longings in me to the core.

I don't know who Gautama is; they tell me
He wasn't born a busy Japanee,
But likely was a Hindu, and they spell me
His other name that sounds like Shak-mou-nee.

But he's the god for me — the jolly idol
Of all that sit so smug about the East,
For in him there's a smiling that can sidle
Right into me and quiet there the beast.

And that now's what I like — so Yokohama
Shall be my berth — tho I may come to beg
Like any yellow-footed holy lama

A bowl of rice to keep me on a leg.
But if I do — in rags and dirt, and shameless —
I'll go at night to see that lantern swing;
And doubtless I may die forsook and nameless;
But then, such worship is the only thing!

For he's the god — Gautama in his shrine there,
To make you see no heav'n is reached by work,
To make you like a heathen go and twine there
A paper prayer, and feel you never shirk.
The priests discovered that and I have learned it,
I sit and watch the saggy moon go o'er,
And "peace," I say, and "ease," and I have earned it!
So add my soul, Gautama, to your store!

BY THE CH'EN GATE

At dusk as wild geese winged their aery way

 Upon the sunset over proud Peking,

To where, darker than jade, the mountains lay,

Set in the misty gold of dying day,

I stood upon the mighty Tartar wall

 By the great-towered gate, the Ch'en, and felt

 The yellow myriads move to it and melt,

 As in some opiate sleep's imagining.

And slowly thro there came a caravan

 Of swinging camels out of far Thibet,

 Upon their tawny flanks the foam still wet

And in their eyes the desert's ancient span.

 What dreams they bore to me I now forget,

But thro me rang the name of Kubla Khan.

A SONG FOR HEALING

(On the South Seas)

When I return to the world again,
The world of fret and fight,
To grapple with godless things and men,
And battle, wrong or right,
I will remember this — the sea,
And the white stars hanging high,
And the vessel's bow
Where calmly now
I gaze to the boundless sky.

When I am deaf with the din of strife,
And blind amid despair,
When I am choked with the dust of life
And long for free soul-air,

I will recall this sound — the sea's
And the wide horizon's hope,
And the wind that blows
And the phosphor snows
That fall as the cleft waves ope.

When I am beaten — when I fall
On the bed of black defeat,
When I have hungered, and in gall
Have got but shame to eat,
I will remember this — the sea,
And its tide as soft as sleep,
And the clear night sky
That heals for aye
All who will trust its Deep.

THE GREAT WALL

(*China, 1912*)

I

Dead Dragon of an empire dead and gone,
Whose tail within the sea at Shan-hai-quan
Is lashed to pieces, brick and mortised stone;
Dead monster lying now in all thy folds
Of vast futility, till crumbling moulds
Each scaly parapet and watch-tower claw
That clutches still up at the sky like bone
Whose strength is spent, leaving decay alone,—
Thou art the mummy of tyrannic Law.

II

A hundred score of seasons was thy length
Stretched over mountain spines with crawling
strength

To keep the dread barbarian aback;
A hundred score of mailed and guarded miles
It ruthlessly was reared thro dark defiles
And chasms, which to span cost untold lives
And filled a million tombs along its track:
For despotry begot thee with its rack —
And with it such dark issue still contrives.

III

Wherefore decay and death unto this land
Have come, as unto thee, O Serpent spanned
Across the past so vastly yet so vain!
In helpless antiquation now it lies,
While vulture nations gather on the skies

To feed upon its huge dismemberment.
For, seeing only easy-gotten gain,
Heartless to its desire for new birth's pain,
They hang above it, with their black intent.

IV

And what shall be the end, O Dragon-Snake,
Past symbol of thy people? Shall they wake?
Shall civilization's arteries, that seek
To pour into their veins renewing dower,
Make them to feel their many-millioned power
And rise in wrath from lethargy to war?
If it shall be, then woe to many a beak
That plucks now at thy loins by peace made weak:
Their depredations then they shall abhor.

WAIKIKI BEACH

(Honolulu)

Waft me away, O sunny winds,
Or let me live beside it,
Lying upon the lulling sands,
Under the high palm shade,
Watching the great white comber cream,
And the brown surf-boats that ride it
And Diamond Head that towers o'er,
In azure skies arrayed.

Waft me at once away! too strong
The spell will be to-morrow;
Stronger than spirit will the sense
Of tropic sweetness sink.
And of the lotos I shall eat
Till far away fades sorrow,

AT THE WORLD'S HEART

While of the flower-laden light
Thro endless years I drink.

Waft me away, away! O let
The night and moon not find me,
Or stars that hang like golden dates
High upon heaven's tree.
For if the day can so beguile
How will the dusk not bind me?
Never could other days and nights
My yearnings reconcile.

Waft me away, O swift away,
Past reef and bar and harbor.
Deck me not in the scarlet *lei*,
To drowse me ever more.
Say not again *Aloha*, but
Farewell, O fairest arbor
That ever the sun and cloud and sea
Reared on a magic shore.

O-TSUYA FORSAKEN

(She tells of following her lover to find him faithless)

My geta clacked. A paper lantern moved, led by a hand, before me. The wind moaned. A wet pine struck my face. It seemed as if I heard the river rushing o'er me.

I followed. In the tea-house geisha danced *The Death of Spring*. Their shadows fell like petals on the shoji. . . . I felt a creeping mist about me cling.

The bridge was darkly arched. Midway the lantern waited. Pale as the hidden moon the hand was! . . . his! . . . She came! . . . Will the gods ever know how much I hated!

They went . . . up thro the torii, by a shrine. Upon the lantern *Ámida* I read. . . .
No more shall *Ámida* be god of mine!

It is not far to the river — down to death. The stars swirled — a conflagration. . . . And yet I could not go. — Shall he be mine in no reincarnation?

A CHANT AT CHION-IN TEMPLE

(*Kyoto*)

All day long on the mokugno

The young priest beats, chanting.

The incense fumes float to and fro,

As from his lips the sutras flow,

The altar lights burn pale and low,

In the temple dimness panting.

All day long in the pines without

The sêmi seem repeating

His sutra-penance round about

Green tombs of those whom not the shout

Of the great bell hanging o'er can rout

From silence, with its beating.

AT THE WORLD'S HEART

All day long, and the Buddha hears,
Or seems to hear, far inward,
The white-clad pilgrim who appears
Upon his way, thro holy years,
To all the shrines that faith endears,
Till no more tempted sinward.

All day long, and the moon comes gold
Above gray-roofed Kyoto.
And then behind a near-by fold
Of shoji shutting out the cold
A shadow falls and as of old
Is heard the tinkling koto.

Slow tinkling, till, as from its strings
Is poured a girl's heart-haunting,
The young priest swept from Buddha-things
And all that penance-chanting brings
Is lost in love's imaginings,
Its sweet eternal wanting.

KOREAN

With gourd o'ergrown the village thatches
Cluster under the mountain side,
Like mushrooms that the bright sun matches
With the brown soil afar and wide.

White-clad the peasant ploughs or wanders
Idly or flecks an easy flail,
While at her task the woman ponders
Thoughts that are empty as her pail.

No temple-top, no dream, no vision
In any face or shapely thing.
Here there is seen life's sad elision
From the Illimitable's well-spring.

AT THE WORLD'S HEART

Only the rice to grow — sad duty;

Only the rice to eat and store.

These are divinity and beauty,

Nor is there longing after more.

THEOPHILUS

(In his cell on Mount Athos)

Circa A. D. 1450

You hear their blasphemies, O God,
 These helots of Mahomet!
Like glutton dogs are they — that turn
 Again to their own vomit.
For Heaven, say they, is a place
 Of silks and wines and swooning
All day on deep divans, while round
 Are houris, love-lutes tuning.
Bright houris — three-score for the couch
 Of each accurst believer —
And all black-eyed and beautiful —
 The Fiend is their deceiver!

AT THE WORLD'S HEART

They say this in their pride, O God,
While we dwell on our rock —
Which never woman's foot has trod . . .
Will you still let them mock!

They say that Heaven is a place
Of riches, slaves and pleasure,
Where every soothing thrill of sense
Is lengthened — past all measure —
Till a full age of easesome bliss
Is packed in every second —
Only by lips that kiss and hands
Caressing to be reckoned!
And, in this carnal Paradise,
They say Christ dwells, a prophet —
But lesser than Mahomet is! —
God, is it not but Tophet!
They say this in their scorn of us
Who shut from out our brain
All memory of woman, thus,
Upon hard beds of pain.

So curse them, God, in every land —
 To whom thy Holy Spirit
Is but a wind, with frankincense
 And spices to endear it,
Which blows across their Paradise
 To sweeten the caresses
Of every houri who attends
 Their evil idlenesses.
Curse them with barrenness and send
 Their souls to Hell for ever,
With women's souls just opposite,
 Beyond their want's endeavour.
Then in thy Skies — tho Christ saith clear
 That none sent thither wed —
Let each who shunned all women here
 On one there rest his head!

BASKING

Give me a spot in the sun,
With the lizard basking by me,
In Sicily, over the sea,
Where Winter is sweet as Spring,
Where Etna lifts his plume
Of curling smoke to try me,
But all in vain for I will not climb
His height so ravishing.

Give me a spot in the sun,
So high on a cliff that, under,
Far down, the flecking sails
Like white moths flit the blue;

That over me on a crag
There hangs, O aery wonder,
A white town drowsing in its nest
That cypress-tops peep thro.

Give me a spot in the sun,
With contadini singing,
And a goat-boy at his pipes
And donkey bells heard round
Upon the mountain paths
Where a peasant cart comes swinging
Mid joyous hot invectives — that
So blameless here abound.

Give me a spot in the sun,
In a land whose speech is flowers,
Whose breath is Hybla-sweet,
Whose soul is still a faun's,
Whose limbs the sea enlaps,
Thro long delicious hours,

AT THE WORLD'S HEART

With liquid tenderness and light
Sweet as Elysian dawns.

Give me a spot in the sun
With a view o'er vale and villa,
O'er grottoed isle and sea
To Italy and the Cape
Around whose turning lies
Old heathen-hearted Scylla,
Whom many an ancient sailor prayed
The gods he might escape.

Give me a spot in the sun:
With sly old Pan as lazy
As I, to tempt me flesh and soul
To disbelief and doubt
Of all gods else, from Jove
To Bacchus born wine-crazy.
Give me, I say, this spot in the sun,
And Realms I'll do without!

THE BALLAD OF THE MAID OF
ORLEANS

Many a man of many a race
Has done a deed of shame,
But never a worse than this was done,
O England, in thy name!

The Maid of Orleans lay in her cell,
Fated and hung with fetters,
Ready for burning at the stake,
By men — at war her betters.

But if they burned her would the might
And mystery she wielded
Be, by the flaming death of her,
Once and forever yielded?

AT THE WORLD'S HEART

“By God, it will not!” said a lord
Of Albion, her foe;
A beast, the vision on whose face
Was mixed with patriot glow.

“By God, it will not, for her strength
Lies in a secret thing —
And martyrdom of a virgin maid
Thro all this land would ring.

“But — give her body a child,” he said,
And looked about him hot.
Thro every man there coldly ran
The serpent of his thought.

“Once give her body a child —” He took
The keys from the warden's hand.
“A maid is a maid, but England's aid
By men was ever planned;

“A maid is a maid — but all the saints
That round about her stir
Shall be as whispering fiends, if once
Love has had toll of her.”

He rose; behind him clanged the door;
It shuddered in their hearts.
He went into her cell, where fear
Pale on her cheek upstarts.

“The Virgin had a child,” he said,
“And you have none, my dear.”
He seized her in his arms: a cry
Rang from her pure and clear.

He seized her in his arms: she fought.
O brutal hand that rested
One moment on her maiden breast
Where only God had nested.

AT THE WORLD'S HEART

O brutal hand, O brutal lips,
O brutal soul that sought
To soil virginity as brave
As Heaven ever wrought!

She beat him from her, bleeding, blind —
She but a maid, a woman!
She beat him off — with chastity
That strove divinely human.

He fell, shaken away — with passion
Burning still in his eye.
“By God, for that one touch,” he said,
“I’d dare, tho I should die.

“And were you but an English wench
And I a king,” he said. . . .
She sank fainting upon the floor,
He deemed that she was dead.

O many a man of many a race
Has done a deed of shame. —
They took her on the morrow out
And burnt her in Christ's name.

INLANDERS

(*Malaya*)

So far away from the sea, O palm, cocoanut palm?
So far away in the jungle with the Tamil alone for
friend?

Do you lift your head so high, to gaze at the dark
night mountains

That hide you from its foam and the cool surf-
wind's low sigh?

So far away from the sea? Alas, so must I dwell,
I who was given a spirit sea-vision alone can sate!
And yet there is still the sky, O palm, and the star-
tides in it,

So let us bide content with our dwellings — you
and I!

INDIA

Strange Pauper among nations, with the rags
Of ancient custom on thy wasted limbs;
Proud blind Faquir, whom life forsaken drags
Along till all desire within thee dims;
Cast from thy neck the chain of skulls that seems
A type to thee of endless death and birth;
Escape from thy vain striving to escape
All that life is of worthlessness or worth.

Go to the ghat of Freedom and plunge in,
Or to the fane of it and cast off Caste.
Then out and cry thy right, with hungry din,
To all earth has, for breaking of thy fast.
Get for thy body food, and then thy soul
Cheated with long denial shall resume
Its daily love of all that lies *between*,
And not *beyond*, birth and the bitter tomb.

THE NEW MOON

(On the Indian Ocean)

Can anything so slender and so frail
As thee, O virgin moon, e'er hope to grow
Into the rounded glory that we know
A little hence shall fill the world with glow?

To Jupiter and Venus in rose skies
Above thee wedded, thou dost only seem
A slim bridemaiden casting a shy gleam
Upon the nuptial splendour of their dream.

Or as a Hindu girl shrinking away
In argent innocence from rites so tense
With passion as to quicken all thy sense
Too soon with longing's lovely exigence.

So with a blushing veil of cloud to cloak
Thy naked modesty, how fair the glide
Of thy young body is adown the wide
Diwan of sunset towering o'er the tide!

How fair! till in a dark sky-chamber hid
Thy sweet shape yields to thoughts I will not thrid.

THE SHAH TO HIS DEAD SLAVE

I look, Laili, for the star we loved
So many moons ago,
Upon this sea
Of Araby,
Where stars love most to glow.
I find it not, for Allah has
So many stars, that part
May well be lost
Or from Him tossed,
As you were from my heart.

And yet I know that it is there,
I feel its spirit light,
As I feel you,
O child of dew,

Slain by my jealous might!
'Tis there, yet never shall I see
Its face again, or find,
Even when death
Has drained my breath,
Your arms about me twined!

A PARABLE OF PAIN

My eyes were weary, heavy and red,
Pain in my breast had made her bed,
Instead of Beauty that I had wed.

I said, "Dark concubine of man,
Giving him child when none else can,
When will he take from thee the ban?

When will he hold thee to his heart,
Sad Hagar, cast from him apart,
And know thee for the mate thou art?

What if thy seed be Ishmael —
And not the other loved too well?
Is it less worthy? can he tell?

What if he casts thee and thy child
Away from him into the wild
Of things sore hated and defiled?

Equal with Beauty in his house
Thou still shalt be to sting and rouse.
He shall not wholly break his vows;

But oft shall welcome thee, thro time,
Back to his heart, and from the chime
Of thy lone lips learn things sublime."

EROSTRATUS

(A fable for all critics)

Hear the tale of Erostratus,
Born in the city of Ephesus —
Tho, forsooth, there is none of us
Needs the moral of it!
For what one of us cares for fame
Till his caring is turned to flame
Ready to burn, without a shame,
Fairest shrines to win it?
Ready to shatter or destroy
Beauty that is the world's best joy,
Art that is pure of all alloy?
Who of us has done it?

Hear the tale of Erostratus,
Haunting the streets of Ephesus,
Hungering ever thus and thus

For renown to take him.

Craving to be upon men's lips —
Mark of their pointing finger-tips,
Till he says — as the passion grips

And the madness moves him —
“Since Diana is praised by all,
Down the temple of her shall fall!
And the builder shall feel each wall
Battering in upon him!”

“Yea,” saith he, with his heart a-craze,
“Unto fame there are many ways;
Who cannot build — then, let him raze,
Thus to be immortal!”

Slips he then thro the temple door:
Soon swift tongues of flame outpour:
He it is that has made them roar:
Matchless is his chortle!

For a name does he leave men thus. . . .

But the moral is not for us

Who would doubtless Erostratus

Damn, to scrub hell's portal.

ALEEN

The long line of the foaming coast
Is muffled by the fog's gray ghost.
I cross the league of sea between
And lift the latch and kiss Aleen.

She throws a log upon the fire.
I draw her to me nigh and nigher.
She does not know what a brief time
Ago it was my arms held — Crime.

The surf is beating on the shore.
We hear our own heart-beatings more.
She speaks of *him* and my reply
Is silence: does she wonder why?

AT THE WORLD'S HEART

"I do not love him: have no fear,"
Her whisper is, against my ear.
At last, "I have no fear," say I.
She starts, as at a wild-beast's cry.

And then she sees red on my coat.
A still-born cry throbs in her throat.
The fog sweeps by the window pane
Her sight is fixed on one dull stain.

I rise and light my pipe and go,
Leaving her standing, staring so.
The wind means storm, I think, to-night:
'Twill not be that which makes her white.

And yet had it been yesterday
She said those words, I still could pray.
There would be still a God above —
As proof of Whom there is but love.

THE STRIVER

When I struggle, with human hands,
 The hands of God betray me.
When I cry, "I will win or die!"
 His silences dismay me.
Yet, when a victim, low I lie
 His victor-wreaths array me.

For I have held but one defeat
 Final and faith-abjuring;
Held — when strife at its worst was rife —
 But *this* thing past the curing;
Failure to see how surely life
 Grows great with great enduring.

MYSTERIES

I

MOONLIGHT

Since man became man
 Moonlight on the sea
Ne'er rippled and ran
 But sadly gazed he.

Till man is no more
 Moonlight on the wave
Shall lead his thought o'er
 From life to the grave.

II

THE SHADOW

On the dim shoji of the universe
The Shadow falls
Of One who dwells within so vague and vast
His Shape appalls.

We stand and view it, lonely in the dark,
But scarce it comes
Ere doubt lest it may be but Maya-dreams
Our sight benumbs.

III

SUDDEN SIGHT

“There is no land,” I said, “in all the world,
Only this glassy sea!”

Then lo, on the horizon hung unfurled
As fair a shore as any Spring sets free.

“God is there none,” I cried, “but only space,
Star-built and without Soul!”

Then lo I looked and all infinity
No more was space, but God who is its Whole.

IV

NON SUFFICIT

Cover it over with lilies,
And cover it with green,
Yet I know that the awful black
Of the coffin lies between.

Cover my heart with kindness,
With comfort-words and grace,
Still it will be a sepulchre
For her remembered face.

V

SIC CUM NOBIS

They who are wise in Nature's mysteries
Tell us the pearl is but a prison cell
Built by the oyster round a preying worm
That creeps, a parasite, into its shell.

So is it with all beauty that we build:
The worm of longing preys upon our heart
Till with fair word or form or music spell
We hush it in imperishable Art.

VI

BIRD-BLISS

There is no mountain, here, or sea,
Yet do I feel infinity,
For there in the top of a tulip-tree
A wild wild bird is singing to me!

And full is his throat, at every note,
Of God — until my heart's afloat
In joy — like every leaf unfurled
By May, the sweetheart of the world.

VII

MAN AND BIRD

(*At sea*)

Thro the deep rifts of dark Atlantic cloud
The moonlight breaks and kindles magic foam,
On which to-night the petrel peacefully
Will make his watery nest — a heaving home.

Within his sea-born dreams will there be one
Of me who watched him in our seething wake
Long hours to-day? and when dawn brings the sun
Will he fare lonelier for my vanished sake?

THE ATHEIST

Over a scurf of rocks the tide
Wanders inward far and wide,
Lifting the sea-weed's sloven hair,
Filling the pools and foaming there,
Sighing, sighing everywhere.

Merged are the marshes, merged the sands,
Save the dunes with pine-tree hands
Stretching upward toward the sky
Where the sun, their god, moves high:
Would I too had a god — e'en I!

For the sea is to me but sea,
And the sky but infinity.
Tides and times are but some chance
Born of a primal atom-dance.
All is a mesh of Circumstance.

In it there is no Heart — no Soul —
No illimitable Goal —
Only wild happenings that wont
Makes into laws no might can shunt
From the deep grooves in which they hunt.

Wings of the gull I watch or claws
Of the cold crab whose strangeness awes:
Faces of men that feel the force
Of a hid thing they call life's course:
It is their hoping or remorse.

Yet it may be that I have missed
Something that only they who tryst,
Not with the sequence of events
But with their viewless Immanence,
Find and acclaim with spirit-sense.

JUDGMENT

Men may say of God
Everything but this,
That He is guilty of our pain
To bring Him bliss.

God may say of men
Everything but one,
That we are penal in His sight
When all is done.

Each may say of life
Everything — and still
Know that its primal blot came not
Thro any will.

A MARINER'S MEMORY

An irised coral-reef,
A lonely wreck upon it,
Scuttled by pirate hands,
Washed over by the tide.
The blue sea-spaces round,
Deep in the sunlight drowned,
And in a calm profound, —
These and no more beside.

No more, but how they haunt me!
For still, awake or sleeping,
Sudden in trance I see
The reef . . . the sky sun-pale.
And then, as when marooned
So long there I had swooned,
I wake with mind untuned,
And cry "A sail! a sail!"

UNDER THE SKY

Far out to sea go the fishing junks,
 With all sails set,
The tide swings gray and the clouds sway,
 The wind blows wet;
Blows wet from the long coast lying dim
 As if mist-born.
Far out they sail, as the stars pale,
 The stars of morn.

Far out to sea go the fishing junks,
 And I who pass
Upon a deck that is vaster reck
 No more, alas,
Of all their life, or they of mine,
 Than comes to this, —
That under the sky we live and die,
 Like all that is.

LOSSES

To lose the voice of the sea,
 And hear only its roar,
To feel infinity
 Foam thro it never more,
To learn that time means death
 And not eternity —
Is but to draw no free and fearless breath.

To watch the slow sun set
 And, in the roseate pause,
No more with wan regret
 Desire what neyer was;
To find that love, grown pale,
 Can all its faith forget, —
Is but in life's finalities to fail.

THE PROFLIGATE

Peace! I must go,
Tho you are all to me,
Comrade and friend,
Mistress and wife.
Ask me not why —
It is life's call to me —
Staying I die.

Faithless I am:
Faithful could never be.
Mating with you
Should have brought rest.
So I believed:
But — as 'twill ever be —
I was deceived.

AT THE WORLD'S HEART

Lure of the blood,
Whim of perversity,
Harries me on —
Want of the new;
Craving to clasp
Tho thro adversity
Some one not you.

Craving for sin,
Craving for punishment —
Even for pain,
Stinging and wild.
Craving to be,
Spite of admonishment,
Madly defiled.

Madly yet free —
Tho you are beautiful:
None to compare
With you I'll find! —

Free to rove on,
Basely, undutiful,
Cruel, unkind.

For I am thus.
Nothing for long to me
Ever can seem
Clear of distaste.
Fairest of lips,
If they belong to me,
Soon become waste.

Too many wants
God has put into me,
Noble and vile,
Human, divine.
So till life ends
It shall bring sin to me —
And husks for swine.

SOUTH SEAS

Softly the ship pushes
Over the wide night ocean,
Soft her bell rings,
The mast-light gleams aloft.
The helmsman at his task
Steadies her keel's motion.
On she sails and on,
Soft she sails and soft.

Planet and constellation
Climb up her shrouds ever,
And keep watch after watch
Above her, calm, withdrawn.
She seems, like all that is,
Absolved from all endeavour.
Soft she sails and soft,
On she sails and on.

CHRIST OR MAHOMET

We came to the Cape as the sun was setting —
unto Cape Guardafui,
Somaliland's unending sand lay desert dark behind.
The crescent moon that is Allah's boon and the
Prophet's sign was fretting
To silvery foam a few thin clouds its beauty had
entwined.

We came to the Cape and a star of passion, such as
the Magi followed,
Hung over it, and the Infinite to star and crescent
seemed
To murmur: " 'Allah' and 'Christ' are names, but
empty names ye fashion:
I am the Nameless—warring creeds are lies, but
lies ye've dreamed."

· TO STROMBOLI

How beautiful from the sea,
How beautiful and holy
You rise, as if you were a peak
Of the gods, engirt with moly!
And yet your lava veins but let
One little village live
Beneath the terror of your brow
Where darkly smoke is drifting, now,
Down to its villas lowly.

How beautiful from the sea,
Where high the gulls o'erwander
As if upon the strange deep fires
Asleep in you to ponder.

And all the isles about you gaze
Toward your height — or far
To where Sicilia's heart of flame
Spells on the sky the Titan's name,
Above great Etna yonder.

How beautiful, how vast,
How linked in ways past knowing
To that third fate, Vesuvius,
From out whose throat comes flowing,
As out of yours, O arbitress
Of lands that laugh secure,
Death's word, when for the Three you choose
To say what myriads life shall lose —
In awful anguish going.

IN A GREEK TEMPLE

(During the Balkan War, 1912)

Between the sea and the mountains,
Under the open sky,
Blue as of old, O Greeks, when you
Went forth to bleed and die,
It stands, superbly columned,
With architrave and frieze
That crumble yet speak gloriously
Of immortalities.

And while to-day there is ringing
Over the busy world
News of a war which now not Zeus,
But a New God has hurled,

While cries that Mitylene
Is taken come again,
I gaze upon this shrine you reared
And think how you were men!

Men by the might of beauty,
Men by the might of sword,
Men with the heart and soul to ken
Such joys as gods uphoard.
Men who could see the perfect
That is not taught by pain.
O Life, fill up again your cup
For such a race to drain!

THE HIDDEN FOE

There is a foe,
Secret and certain,
Who hides behind
Life's every curtain;

Behind each quest
And each achieving,
Behind all beauty,
All believing.

And ever ready
Is he to thrust
His skull-face thro
And make all dust.

So who would hallow
Time's slipping sod,
Who still would hearten
The world with God,

Must shut this foe
From all intrusion
This foe, who is—
Cold Disillusion.

TELEPATHY

(He, alone, by the sea)

What has become of little Annette?
Her other name I now forget.
The sea recalls her strangely yet.

What has become of her brown hair
And body slender pure and fair,
Given to me without a prayer?

What has become of her? That night
I took her all — and loved her quite.
Parting I left her strangely white.

(She, on the streets)

What has become of him — the first
To ask of me what now the worst
May have for any coin accurst?

What has become of him: my name
Could he recall if that night came?
Would he believe who wrought my shame?

Christ, it was love of him! — I thought
That with my body I had bought
Bliss for me ever in his thought.

THE EXPLORERS

(Captain Scott and his comrades)

A snow-cairn is their grave,
 Far in the frozen South.
A cross of skis above it,
With Christ alone to love it.
A snow-cairn is their grave,
 And never priestly mouth
Shall bring it prayer — or holy care,
But only wind — the bitter wind
And God shall visit there.

And see, under the pall —
 Under the snowy stole —
Heroic faces whiling
Eternity with smiling.

For so they lie — and all

The white peace of the Pole

Shall wrap them deep within its sleep

Till death no more, wintering o'er,

His hoary watch shall keep.

TO A BOY

(Seen with his mother in a Café)

That is your mother, boy?

The woman with wanton eyes
And losel lips, whose laughter slips
Passion into men's finger-tips,
Till they would clasp her as she sips
Her wine there, Circe-wise?

That is your mother? she,

Who makes of love a disgrace?
And of desire a shameful fire
To burn in the blood and never tire —
Till it is quenched for the old hire
That women ever face?

That is your mother? Ah!

And you, do you understand?
So little you are, a scant thirteen,
Have you heard of Helen and Egypt's queen,
And, guessing at what such glances mean,
Are seared, as with a brand?

Why then, away . . . and weep! . . .

Yet O, that eyes should shed
Such tears, such piteous tears, as those
That start from the heart of a child who knows
The breast that has nursed him can enclose
Unchastities so dread.

PAGANS

I could not pray if I would to-day,
For all the world is given to me
In one great joy of wind and June,
Heaven and earth and heart in tune.
I could not pray, and if God be
Other than here I feel and see,
Naught proves it, so my bliss is full
And wanting is unbelievable.

So up the hills, to the hill-tops,
I go to see where the world stops,
The world that leads my eyes on
To the rim of the green horizon.
O up the hills where white and dim
And hazily far the clouds swim

Upon the leafy marge whence leaps
The mind, out into azure deeps —
Out into vast infinity,
As a diver into the sea!

For not a valley to-day could hold
My heart shod for the heights!
The daisies ringed me around with gold —
But I escaped their fairy fold
And followed the path with a backward laugh
Up, where the hawk alights,
On the topmost bough touching the brow
Of the bending blue where dreams come true,
If the dreamer enough delights!
Or if he will listen, wait, and gaze,
Till the wind on him, chanting, lays
The spell of its aery might!

And high I sit — as infinite
As the universe that streams

Mysteriously and magically
And joyous thro my dreams.
So why should I pray if I would to-day,
Since all the world is given to me
In one great joy of early June —
God himself thro the whole a-swoon,
As pagan as are we!

ARGOSIES

Dim thoughts are flitting o'er my heart

Like sails over the sea.

I know not on what wind they come

Or to what quest they flee.

I only know they leave behind

A void of mystery.

I watch them setting phantom forth,

I see them catch the breeze.

They are like winged things whose ports

Are God's eternities.

Ere Birth I know them — and past Death

Shall sight them, on new seas.

TO THE YOUNGER GENERATION

We have taught you bridle and saddle;
We have given you room to run;
Your steeds are bred
Of a hope high-fed
That we of our fathers won.
To us there are still the stirrups
Of days that we have known,
But soon you will ride,
Side by our side,
Bidding us hold our own.

The reins of the world you will grapple
Out of our curbing hands.
You will change our goal,
And Time, as a foal,

Will guide with new commands.
For so we did in our season,
And so your sons shall do,
Wherefore we pray,
As you break away,
But this: ride Vision-true.

For not in the New lies peril:
We fear no youngest dream
That ever was
Of Utopias
Wrapped in supernal gleam.
But know, there is goalless running,
A spurring, but for speed,
With an intense
Low love of sense
Blind to the world's soul-need.

Mount then a reproachless saddle,
We have given you room to run.

Your steeds are bred
Of a hope high-fed;
So see, ere the race be done,
That you yield the reins to your children
More near to the final goal.
And if we cry
As you pass us by,
Heed not — but achieve the Whole.

THE END

PORZIA

By

CALE YOUNG RICE

IT PRESENTS a last phase of the Renaissance with great effect." *Sir Sydney Lee.*

"'Porzia' is a very romantic and beautiful thing. After a third reading I enjoy and admire it still more." *Gilbert Murray.*

"There are certain lyrical qualities in the dramas of Cale Young Rice and certain dramatic qualities in many of his finest lyrics that make it very difficult for the critic to resolve whether he is highest as singer or dramatist. 'Porzia' is a poetic play in which these two gifts blend with subtle and powerful effectiveness. It is not written in stereotyped heroic verse, but in sensitive metrical lines that vary in beat and measure with the strength, the tenderness, the anguish, bitterness and passion of love or hate they have to express. The bizarre and poignant central incident on which the action of 'Porzia' turns is such as would have appealed irresistibly to the imagination and dramatic instincts of the great Elizabethan dramatists, and Mr. Rice has developed it with a force and imaginative beauty that they alone could have equaled and with a restraint and delicacy of touch which makes pitiful and beautiful a

story they would have clothed in horror.
. . . He turns what might have been a
tragic close to something that is loftier and
more moving. . . . It matters little that
we hesitate between ranking Mr. Rice highest
as dramatist or lyricist; what matters is that
he has the faculty divine beyond any living
poet of America; his inspiration is true, and
his poetry is the real thing." *The London
Bookman*.

"'Porzia' has the swift human movement
which Mr. Rice puts into his dramas, and
technique of a very high order. . . . The
dramatic form is the most difficult to sustain
harmoniously and this Mr. Rice always
achieves." *The Baltimore News*.

"To the making of 'Porzia' Mr. Rice has
summoned all the resources of his dramatic
skill. On the constructive side it is particu-
larly strong. . . . The opening scene is
certainly one of the happiest Mr. Rice has
written, while the climaxing third act is a
brilliant piece of character study
The play is rich in poetry; . . . in it Mr.
Rice has scored another success . . . in
a field where work of permanent value is
rarely achieved." *Albert S. Henry (The
Book News Monthly)*.

"Mr. Rice apes neither the high-flown style
of the Elizabethans, nor the turgid and cryptic

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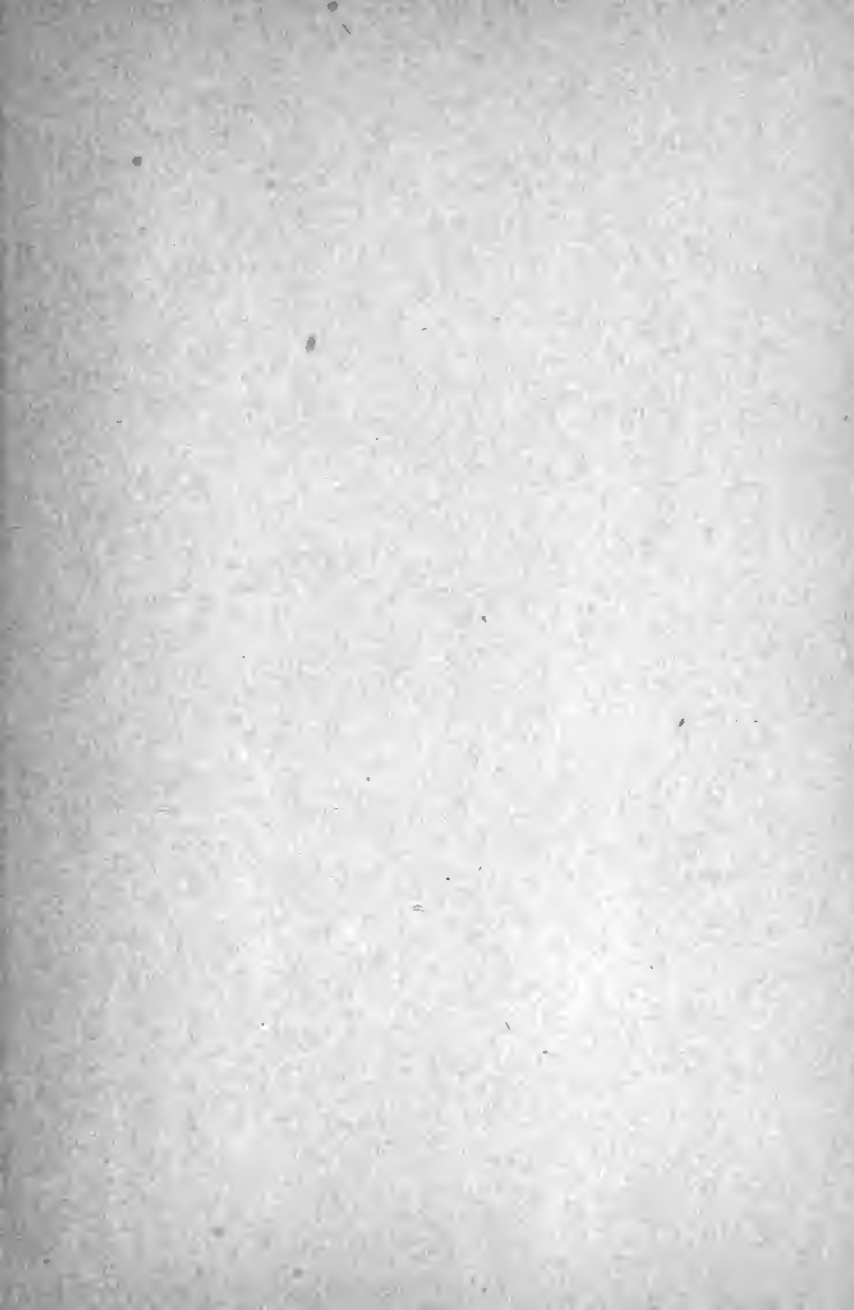
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